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Abstract

BACKGROUND: Third Culture Kids (TCKs) are those who have been raised in a culture outside of the culture of their parents, usually in a host country that differs from the country of their birth, because of their parents' work or religious endeavors. Some of the groups that identify themselves as TCKs include children of military service members stationed overseas, children of members of the Foreign Service, and the children of missionaries. These children are growing up in a culture and society that is different from their parents' passport country and may vastly differ in language spoken, religious beliefs, and cultural norms. Pollock and Van Reken (2001) explain TCKs as being between cultures, stating that the third culture is developed by the child to explain an identity that is different from that of the host country or the parents' home country. This retrospective narrative inquiry explored the undergraduate college experiences of Adult Third Culture Kids (ATCKs) to understand the risk and protective factors associated with repatriation and collegiate engagement.

METHODS: This study employed a qualitative approach combining heuristic analysis and procedures of grounded theory during data collection, analysis, and interpretation of findings. Twelve semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face with individuals who self-identified as ATCKs and had completed a four year undergraduate program earning a degree.

RESULTS: Concepts related to understanding the self, and meaningful connections and relationships emerged from the data revealing how repatriation can be simultaneously volatile and emotionally grounding. Themes uncovered during data analysis included perceptions of *self-identity*, *investment*, the concept of *home*, *uneven development*, and factors contributing to *college choice*.

DISCUSSION: Research findings suggest the need for culturally informed administrative practices to mitigate psychosocial challenges associated with academic engagement. Interventions related to student identification procedures, supportive resources, and campus life programs should be incorporated to support multicultural students starting at the time of application and continuing through to graduation.

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INQUIRY OF INTERNATIONAL UPBRINGING AND COLLEGIATE ENGAGEMENT

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Identifying Third Culture Kids

Globalization, roughly defined as the increasing interconnectedness of the world's economies, infrastructure, communication, and culture, has been a defining force in the global international environment over the last two decades with implications touching all aspects of society. The 1990's saw a boost in technology with the development of the Internet and mobile capabilities, growth in the European Union, and a significant increase in trade of goods in services. This increase in globalization has steadily resulted in multinational corporations steadily moving toward international business ventures that require internationally mobile staffing. Families are choosing to expose their children to other cultures and are welcoming the opportunity to spend several years outside of their passport countries for financial gain and business opportunities (Cockburn, 2002; Moore & Barker, 2012; Shangquan, 2000). In consideration of the expected repatriation of these migrants, as presented by the UN DESA (UN,2013), examination of the needs unique to this expanding group as they enter higher education is warranted.

Sociology and linguistic studies have developed definitions of culture and cultural sensitivity used in a variety of disciplines. In the fields of education and communications the definitions are used to understand the development of behaviors and perspectives. Cultural sensitivity is the extent to which norms, values, beliefs, and behavioral patterns are incorporated within diverse settings (Resnicow, Baranowski, Ahluwalia, & Braithwaite, 1999). Cultural sensitivity relies on the awareness of the dimensions that

define culture: surface and deep identifiers. Surface identifiers are the racial/ethnic characteristics easily identified superficially such as physical appearance, language, food, and music (Resnicow, et al., 1999). Deep identifiers are more elusive as they are the values and assumptions that inform beliefs associated with gender roles, concepts of time, causality, shame, responsibility, ethics, and morals (Shaules, 2007). Children growing up internationally share the experience of *deep cultural learning* where their worldviews are informed by the host country's cultural phenomenon (Shaules, 2007). In some cases the individuals worldviews are minimally altered. In other cases the individuals beliefs are significantly transformed by a greater understanding of the community and its system of values.

J. Useem, Donoghue, and R. Useem (1963) first identified the blending of a host culture and home culture (referred to as the passport culture) to form a third culture in American children raised overseas. Sociologists Ruth and John Useem examined this phenomenon through their experiences as missionaries in India in the 1950s and primarily focused their attention on missionary children. They later included other expatriates in their research to further develop their theory regarding development of the third culture. Useem et al. (1963) explained that a third culture, which they referred to as a binational third culture, did not result from a merging of two cultures but was subconsciously developed by an individual with consideration given to societal norms, interpersonal exchanges, work-related norms, standards of living, and institutional arrangements of both the passport and host cultures (Useem et al., 1963). Useem et al. (1963) explained that the third culture is not carried by a self-contained group, therefore, studying how a third culture is developed is difficult because it is specific to the

individual's cross-cultural experiences.

Pollock and Van Reken (2001) expounded on the ideas of a third culture by differentiating between the recurring experiences and characteristics of Third Culture Kids (TCKs) from others of varying multi-minority status. These experiences included being raised in a cross-cultural world that is highly mobile and includes the following specific criteria: distinct differences between the passport and host cultures, expected repatriation, privileged lifestyle, and system identity. Pollock and Van Reken (2001) defined TCKs as:

A person who has spent a significant part of his or her developmental years outside the parents' culture. The TCK frequently builds relationships to all of the cultures, while not having full ownership in any. Although elements from each culture may be assimilated into the TCK's life experience, the sense of belonging is in relationship to others of similar background. (p. 13)

This definition of TCKs has been used to explain the upbringing of a wide-ranging group of individuals who spent significant periods of their childhood living outside of their passport cultures; children of military service members, missionaries, diplomats, and international business professionals. Pollock and Van Reken (2001) explained that continuous re-examination of the TCK phenomenon is necessary by sharing Ruth Hill Useem's perspective that, "concepts change as we get to know more; other times concepts change because what happens in the world is changing" (p. 16).

Multidisciplinary researchers have used a variety of terms to describe children

that have lived outside of their passport countries for over one year. Some of these terms include sojourner, global nomad, international student, and expatriate (expats). This dissertation will focus on the specific group of international migrants referred to as TCKs and will identify TCKs based on the personal characteristic descriptions outlined by Pollock and Van Reken (2001) as they have established themselves as the primary advocates of TCK understanding and support within the international community. They describe TCKs as Cultural Chameleons gifted with the ability to adapt to different cultures by easily switching between languages, relating to their peers through cultural practices and norms, and by taking on cultural characteristics needed to blend in within a host culture (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). The description of TCKs also mentions the challenges of this chameleon-like persona by stressing the lack of cultural balance that develops as a result of continuous adaptation. Pollock and Van Reken (2001) call TCKs Hidden Immigrants within their passport cultures upon repatriation as negotiation of self versus cultural identity takes place and new psychosocial challenges present themselves.

Statement of the Problem

The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) estimated that there are 232 million international migrants worldwide in its most recent review of youth migration with approximately 15 million identified as refugees (United Nations, 2013). A study of the remaining 217 million shows that migrants between the ages of 15 and 35 migrated voluntarily to pursue employment, higher education, or in response to family reasons. The UN differentiates long-term international migrants from

other groups as those meeting the following criteria; living outside of the passport country for a period exceeding one year, voluntary migration, and expected repatriation (UN, 2013). Nearly six decades ago, sociologists studying the unique experiences of children reared outside of their passport culture identified those same criteria as characteristics for a group they named Third Culture Kids (TCKs) (J. Useem, Donoghue, and R. Useem, 1963). The repatriation of TCKs often occurs while the family remains in the host country. Therefore, international schools and government agencies have begun to identify ways to support these students upon re-entry.

Repatriation to pursue higher education was one of three primary reasons identified by the UN DESA (UN, 2013) for international migrant re-entry to the passport country. International schools and government agencies that facilitate the transition back to the passport country have identified several areas of concern specific to TCKs. TCKs report grief and loss, feelings of cultural homelessness, interpersonal relationship struggles, self-identity versus cultural identity crises, and mental health issues as recurring themes (Cockburn, 2002; Eakin, 2013; Fail, Thompson, & Walker, 2004; Hoersting & Jenkins, 2011; Limberg & Lambie, 2011; Morales, 2015).

Repatriation for the purpose of higher education also coincides with the transition from adolescence to adulthood. All students entering college are susceptible to challenges and stressors as they leave their supportive environments and acclimate to the college setting. Cross-cultural literature posits that additional psychosocial stressors may affect TCKs in contrast to their monocultural counterparts during college adjustment as they are forced to negotiate both the end of adolescence and the pressures of establishing their identity while simultaneously being dislocated from their

support system and the security of a familiar environment defined by cultural norms that differ from those of the passport country (Azmitia, Syed, & Radmacher, 2011; Eakin, 2013; Fail, Thompson, & Walker, 2004; Limberg & Lambie, 2011; Morales, 2015; Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). Pollock and Van Reken (2001) identify grief and loss as common responses following re-entry in response to the separation from family, peers, and the cultural environment of the host country. Research focused on college transition fails to suitably address the severing or distancing of these relationships as significant factors for transitioning students. Unlike their monocultural peers, minority students also present with additional stressors because of the lack of peers and university faculty that share similar backgrounds to their own and can serve as models of identity development (Azmitia et al., 2011). TCKs transitioning to college focus on adjusting to the new environment and establishing a new identity based on the values and beliefs of the passport culture that, while new to the TCK, have remained a constant for monocultural peers throughout their developmental years (Cockburn, 2002; Limberg & Lambie, 2011; Walters & Auton-Cuff, 2009). TCKs may struggle to connect with monocultural peers because they do not share the diverse cultural experiences that inform a TCK's belief and values system (Cockburn, 2002) and priority is given to adjustment to the new environment instead of intrapersonal identity development (Walters & Auton-Cuff, 2009). For these reasons, Limberg and Lambie (2011) stress the importance of providing a culturally competent academic setting to support TCKs through cultural transitions and prevent imposing personal beliefs and attitudes of the passport culture that may hinder psychosocial functioning.

Erikson (1959) explained that identity formation begins when a child understands

his place within a system and his community validates his role and importance. Aligning with Erikson's theory of ego development, the stage of adolescence when a student leaves high school to enter the collegiate setting is a stage of crisis. Research on university foreign exchange students presents the re-entry transition after a brief academic period outside of the passport country as a crisis requiring counseling program support (Arthur, 2003), and heightens understanding of the re-entry transition for TCKs attending college. Proposing that re-entry be viewed as a psychological process and not simply a physical relocation, Arthur (2003) explains that foreign exchange students require assistance navigating the college environment and the passport culture upon re-entry because acculturation to the host culture results in a degree of change in both personal beliefs and role identity that the student and their support system may not expect.

Attachment theory is a model of development that focuses on interpersonal relationships that start in infancy with a primary caregiver and later inform interpersonal adult relationships. Shilkret and Shilkret (2011) clarify that while attachment theorists place emphasis on the stages of development being universal, critics point out the importance of being culturally informed as attachment expectations differ from culture to culture. Research has identified the importance of attachment styles on college adjustment (Kenny & Rice, 1995), coping styles (Lopez, Mauricio, Gormley, Simko, & Berger, 2001), and the ability for college students to seek out help (Marmarosh, 2009) but has lacked sufficient inclusion of cross-cultural perspectives. Drawing from the teachings of Ainsworth and Bowlby regarding attachment bonds, Agishtein and Brumbaugh (2013) stress the need for research to explore the ways cultural norms

influence attachment outcomes in a highly globalized society throughout the life span of the individual. Ainsworth (1967) observed in Ugandan families that environmental and social factors shaped variability in attachment styles. Bowlby (1979) affirmed that attachment relationships can vary in type if meeting the tenets of protection, secure base, and safe haven.

Milligan (1998) proposes an alternate attachment relationship by acknowledging the importance of attachment to place developed through a series of meaningful experiences that occur within a particular location. She explains that a disruption to place attachment results in loss of both the past experiences as well as future experiences that have been imagined as potentially meaningful (Milligan, 1998). Kalsner and Pistole (2003) also present an alternate attachment relationship in their observations of multiethnic college students that identify someone other than a parent as the primary attachment figure. In contrast to the independence and autonomy encouraged in Western value systems, students coming from cultural backgrounds characterized by interdependence and cohesiveness negotiate college adjustment differently and will retain cultural patterns through activities that are not involved with the university setting (Kalsner & Pistole, 2003).

In an attempt to bring attention to the needs of students transitioning between host countries, international schools have contributed to the literature by focusing on students' needs during adolescence, related to social and emotional development, and the limitations, related to the lack of multicultural competence of school staff, within the international school setting in helping students to acclimate and subsequently transition successfully (Cockburn, 2002; Morales, 2015). Cockburn (2002) presents the need for

transitional programs at the international school level based on a TCK's conceptualization of home being rooted in relationships within the nuclear family and with other TCKs because of the shared understanding of being a foreigner in a host country. International schools are equipped to foster the psychosocial growth of TCKs by assisting with the negotiation of the transitional culture of a TCK lifestyle and the culture of the host country because international school staff often shares the transitional culture of their students as expatriates themselves (Cockburn, 2002). Morales (2015) concurs with the need for transitional programs but clarifies that multicultural populations are not specific to international schools and culturally competent supportive services need to be developed at all levels of education in order to support the academic success of TCKs during transition.

Purpose of the Study

A gap in the literature exists in understanding the needs of TCKs once they have entered the college setting and physically transition to their passport country while simultaneously navigating psychological development during the transition from adolescence to adulthood. With academic success defined as the completion of a four-year baccalaureate degree, research is needed to determine ways that TCKs can be encouraged and supported within higher education using a psychosocial and culturally informed approach to prevent attrition. In addition, consideration must be given to the roles played by counseling centers and faculty within the collegiate setting in assisting with the physical transition from host to passport country while simultaneously supporting psychosocial needs. This dissertation will explore the college experiences of

ATCKs through the examination of retrospective narratives of undergraduate experiences to gain understanding regarding resilience, risk, and protective factors associated with repatriation and academic success. Narratives will be analyzed using a heuristic approach to contribute to scholarship in the areas of culturally competent social work education, practice, and policy development by answering the following questions:

How do the experiences of being a TCK influence social and academic experiences in the college setting?

Where do TCKs find support during repatriation and the transition to college?

How do TCKs seek out and form meaningful connections during the undergraduate college years?

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

Psychosocial Functioning and Attachment Theory

Prior to the development of attachment theory by Bowlby (1969) and Ainsworth (1967), other theories of development were used to interpret and understand interpersonal development and psychosocial functioning. Erikson outlined psychosocial development in eight distinct stages. This dissertation will focus on the periods of adolescence and young adulthood as they align with the transition to college. Erikson (1959) identified adolescence as the period of identity and role confusion where there is an, “accrued confidence that one’s ability to maintain inner sameness and continuity is matched by the sameness and continuity of one’s meaning for others (pg. 94)”. Berzoff (2011) explains the universality of an internal struggle during this period as adolescents negotiate identity and self-acceptance. Berzoff (2011) explains that Erikson’s definition for a healthy identity can only be understood within the sociocultural and historical contexts of the adolescent’s environment, with consideration given to race and religion. In observation of minority groups, Erikson (1959) noted that a crisis occurs when there is primary caregiver disconnection and results in discontinuity of the healthy identity formation for the child.

Bowlby and Ainsworth stressed that the relationship between mother and child developed in order to provide safety and highlighted the importance of the early dependence on a primary caregiver. Shilkret and Shilkret (2011) explain that the degree to which a mother, or primary caregiver, is sensitive and responsive to the needs of a child and informs child’s attachment style, and therefore the quality of future

relationships for that child. A secure attachment is one wherein a child feels safe to explore the environment and use the mother as a source of calm and encouragement. An insecure attachment is characterized by avoidant, ambivalent, or disorganized feelings in relationships in response to unmet security needs in early developmental periods (Shilkret & Shilkret, 2011). Attachment is understood and experienced throughout the lifecycle, and revisited during periods of transition and crisis, including transition to college.

Kenny and Rice (1995) suggest that attachment theory can be used to inform the college experience by using the attachment to parents as a guide for viewing attachment styles in late adolescence. These authors describe how the attachment, “highlights the adaptive value of supportive and interdependent relationships throughout the life span and especially during periods of stress, such as the transition to college” (Kenny & Rice, 1995, p.435). A healthy secure base can be observed in students who call home to discuss concerns with parents, and connect with family, because there is a reinforcement of support while encouraging autonomy (Kenny & Rice, 1995). Kenny (1987) draws parallels between college transition and Ainsworth’s “Strange Situation” (Ainsworth, Blehar, Water, & Wall, 1978) by explaining that leaving one’s family to pursue higher education is a period of exploration that can serve as an example of a secure attachment if the student has support and encouragement from parents. Furthermore, secure attachments to parents influence positive internal working models of self that contribute to resilience, coping skills, and positive view of others as trustworthy and reliable (Kenny & Rice, 1995). Kogut (2016) explains that people with secure attachments, “are likely to have strong self-efficacy beliefs, considering that their

interpersonal histories are generally positive, thus reinforcing their feelings that their efforts are efficacious” (p.65). In contrast, insecure attachment to a parent has a negative influence on internal working models of self and perception of others as the individual is predisposed to interpret loss and distress as personal attacks and failures (Kenny & Rice, 1995), as well as directly affect the individual’s perceptions regarding academic efficacy and achievement (Kogut, 2016).

In researching attachment as it relates to academic achievement, Kogut (2016) references Bowlby’s (1969) assertion that attachment style continues from adolescence to adulthood as a basis for exploring the relationship between academic efficacy and attachment style with focus on avoidant and ambivalent insecure attachments. Research findings identified correlations between ambivalent attachment and self-defeating attitudes and avoidant attachment and defensive/self-serving attitude, that impacted academic outcomes (Kogut, 2016). However, this study did not account for cultural differences in the participants nor did it include disorganized insecure attachment style in the inclusion criteria of participants. While pertinent to the discussion of insecure attachment styles and academic success, this research supports the need for further study regarding all attachment styles identified by Bowlby and Ainsworth within a culturally diverse context.

Cultural Competence and Attachment

Bowlby (1969) described attachment in adolescence and adulthood as, “commonly directed toward persons outside the family but also towards groups and institutions other than the family with a school or college, a work group, a religious

group, or a political group constituting for some people a principal attachment figure” (p. 206). Ainsworth’s (1967) conservative position on attachment variability among cultures acknowledged that environmental, social, and genetic factors contributed to the development of an attachment system but did not provide specific evidence to disprove that variability may be due to the importance of secondary or alternate attachment relationships. Later, Ainsworth (1989) conceded that Bowlby’s (1969) presentation of attachment to others warrants additional research explaining that, “the major function of attachment theory is to guide further research, which in turn will extend and refine our theoretical understanding” (p.715). She stressed the need for research on, “how attachments to parents and surrogate figures develop through the life cycle and the behavioral systems underlying friendships” (Ainsworth, 1989, p.715). Therefore, attachment theory serves as an ideal foundation from which to explore the existence of alternate primary attachments for individuals who have formed strong attachments to others (ie. peers, extended family members, non-familial caregivers), places, or groups meeting the criteria of a secure base. While attachment is a universal concept it is essential to look closely at how cultural norms and values inform the development of a variety of alternate attachment relationships for culturally diverse individuals.

Pollock and Van Reken (2001) explain the importance of peer relationships for TCKs as a primary source of experience validation. They explain that TCKs have difficulty relating to monocultural peers who lack the unique experiences of growing up as expats and may struggle to develop peer relationships upon return to the passport culture (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). This experience validation from peers aligns with Hazan and Shaver’s (1994) explanation of the development of a peer secure base when

a friend consistently proves responsive during times of distress and provides acknowledgement. For TCKs this acknowledgement is often in regard to the unique experiences of detachment from TCK peers, the culture of the host country, and physical transitions (Pollock and Van Reken, 2001). Liable, Carlo, & Raffaella (2000) clarify that adolescents often rely on peers, instead of parental figures, for emotional support because the period of adolescence is one of emerging autonomy and self-exploration where peers serve as not only confidants but also as partners in traversing this period of growth and development. Through observation of three groups that meet the TCK criteria (military, missionary, and international school children) we can clearly identify peer group affiliations but also characteristics related to place/location that support the theory of place attachment.

Counted (2016) created an exploratory framework using interdisciplinary meanings given to the concept of place and the dynamics of people-place relationships. Through the interpretation of works by Seamon (2012), Jorgensen and Stedman (2001), and Scannell and Gifford (2010), Counted (2016) explains that place attachment is the result of a triad relationship constructed of place, person, and process dimensions. More simply stated, a place attachment develops through a combination of physical, experiential, and interpersonal identities of connection that provide meaning for the individual. Giuliani (2003) elaborates on the meaning of experiences by explaining that place attachments are affective bonds to communities (religious institutions, neighborhoods, cities, and countries) that define our identity through enrichment of values, goals, and significance. Increased globalization means a variety of communities host TCKs and many of these communities may vary in beliefs regarding gender roles

and family composition, among other salient and critical features. Ainsworth (1967) sought to explore attachment variations through a cultural framework with her Uganda study and focused on the mother-child bond heavily informed by Western tradition. Attention must now be given to the diverse cultures that serve as host communities for TCKs to broaden the definition of primary attachment relationship beyond mother-child to include generationally informed roles, peer, and community relationships.

Brown, Hawkins-Rodgers, and Kapadia (2008) critically assessed the use of attachment theory to determine whether the Western values that serve as a foundation for the identification of attachment styles exclude crucial information regarding cultural norms needed for effective application of the theory. Referencing research conducted with East Asian families by Hu & Meng (1996) and Minuchin (2002), it was discovered that the role of a primary caregiver needed to include extended family members, with grandparents playing a vital role in child rearing (Brown et al., 2008). With consideration given to the difference between Western (individualistic) and Eastern (collectivist) thought processes, the authors concur with Rothbaum, Weisz, Pott, Miyake, and Morrelli (2000) and Keller (2012) that attachment theory must be culturally informed so as not to remain grounded in Western mindsets that may result in inaccurate assumptions (Brown et al., 2008). Highlighting differing cultural patterns related to dependence and autonomy, socialization goals, caregiver roles, and intergenerational transmissions of attachment, attachment theory could be used within a culturally competent framework to provide accurate understanding of minority students' needs (Keller, 2012).

The U.S. Department of Education's definition of a minority student as, "an

Alaskan Native, American Indian, Asian-American, Black (African-American), Hispanic American, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander” (Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions Program, 2005), is not inclusive of TCKs. TCKs, while part of the cultural minority, may present as part of the racial majority. An example of this is a Caucasian student raised in Hong Kong attending a university in the mid-western United States. While he is racially part of the majority, his cultural identification may be strongly grounded in those of his Asian host culture. A polyglot who identifies Cantonese as his first language and struggles to understand American slang is not easily identified within the university setting. College campuses can serve as excellent examples of small culturally diverse societies. Cultural sensitivity and support from faculty and administrators is vital in creating a safe and encouraging environment for minority students through the development of a dual perspective on the collegiate experience (Norton, 1978). The dual perspective proposes that an understanding of minority group differences, values, and cultural norms while simultaneous awareness of one’s own beliefs and attitudes allows for more accurate assessment of student needs and improves collaboration and engagement (Norton, 1978). Norton (1978) observed that minority individuals with secure attachments to their primary caregivers and cultural norms developed and maintained positive self-esteem that buffered against the negative effects of the larger and culturally dissimilar society and promoted positive functioning. While Norton (1978) presents the dual perspective within the framework of social work education this approach to cross-cultural competency reinforces the relevance of attachment theory with TCKs in higher education. Viewing cultural awareness separately from racial awareness in areas of campus life that are not directly

related to the classroom, such as admissions and student services, is vital for positive collegiate engagement with multicultural students.

Current Research Used to Inform TCK Needs in Higher Education

Using the terms *multi-minority*, *multiethnic*, and *multiracial* interchangeably, research exploring ethnic and cultural identity development has examined how TCKs have been overlooked in literature. Three core reasons to explain this lack of inclusion: (1) the inability to find cultural patterns to group these individuals and create a whole; (2) these individuals may work harder to assimilate into the social group and become difficult to identify; and (3) the individual decision to identify with one group and deny any aspects of another group in hopes of becoming settled and accepted (Vivero & Jenkins, 1999). Furthermore, Phinney (1990, 1996) explains that theoretical writing outweighs empirical research because studies related to ethnic identity have focused on the children of immigrants and refugees who may welcome or seek out acculturation and assimilation to the new home culture, resulting in positive experiences that support that original theoretical hypothesis of identity development.

Other internationally mobile individuals (commonly identified as global nomads, sojourners, international students, and expatriates) have been widely studied and develop a foundation for understanding TCKs. While their experiences appear similar to those of TCKs, the majority of these individuals are identified as students in university foreign exchange programs with no prior experience living abroad or there is insufficient information provided in the sampling criteria to determine whether the study participants share the TCK characteristics outlined by Pollock and Van Reken (2001). However, the

literature shows attention has been given to repatriation and stressors associated with re-entry to the passport culture and the needs of these students within higher education to determine the best way for families and universities to support positive transition back (Arthur, 2003; Gaw, 1999; Pitts, 2009; Terrazas-Carrillo, Hong, & Pace, 2014).

Gaw (1999) references international students and focuses on the difficulty of re-entry into the passport culture due to reverse culture shock, defined as the process of re-acclimating and re-aculturating to a passport culture. Developing this definition from Adler's (1975) explanation of culture shock as a set of emotional reactions that include feelings of helplessness, irritability, and fear that stem from the loss of one's culture, Gaw (1999) explains that culture shock can be anticipated and non-traumatic because expectations exist regarding the new and distinctly different norms of the host culture an individual will be entering. In contrast reverse culture shock may be considered traumatic as the individual is not prepared to experience the passport culture as anything different from what trusted others (ie. parents, teachers, and peers) have communicated in preparation for repatriation (Gaw, 1999). For TCKs that have not had the opportunity to visit the passport country during their time abroad, or have limited contact with family in the passport country, repatriation is more comparable to a move to a new country than a return to a homeland.

Arthur (2003) argues that a positive re-entry is also affected by the degree of acculturation to the host culture. A longer period of time within a host culture provides opportunity to challenge beliefs of the passport culture and develop autonomy informed by cultural norms of the host country. This can affect the individual's feelings about the return to family and friends within the passport culture (Arthur, 2003). Terrazas-Carrillo

et al. (2014) posit that these significant periods within the host culture alter previous attachments. The need to acclimate to the host environment and culturally informed social situations results in the development of an attachment to place as a coping mechanism. For TCKs, this coping mechanism often alters the concept of home from passport country to the interstitial culture of community that develops among expat peers through shared experiences, not defined by place, and not understood by those who haven't lived it (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). Therefore, re-entry to attend college may cause disruption by severing the attachment to place or community that has informed social interactions and self-identity in the host country. This may result in reverse culture shock for students returning to the passport country that have defined their identity within the context of the norms of the previous host culture (Terrazas-Carrillo et al., 2014).

Individual attachments to broader cultural, social, or ethnic identities may alleviate college adjustment challenges for minority populations. Drawing on Ethier and Deaux's (1994) findings that strong ethnic group involvement prior to college shows a positive connection in the way minority students replace attachments to home with attachments on campus, Marmarosh (2009) encourages consideration of individual attachment style as it relates to group attachment. For TCKs the definition of this group may vary to include peers racially identified with the host culture, other expats that have repatriated, and international students studying abroad at same university. Hong, Fang, Yang, and Phua (2013) clarify that strong ethnic group involvement may be interpreted as an attachment to the cultural identity characteristics and values shared by the members of the group and not the individuals themselves. They posit that internationally

mobile childhoods have resulted in the development of cultural attachments to a group of peers that supports positive transitions and adjustments to new environments through emotional support and protection against cultural adversity (Hong et al., 2013).

In consideration of multicultural factors that contribute to positive and successful transitions for adolescents, TCKs are once again excluded from the literature focused on resilience in academic settings. Scholarship as it relates to international student experience has focused on students that will return to their home country following the international foreign exchange experience. Arthur's (2003) discussion of the impact a short residence, during brief periods of student exchange, in a host country can have on an individual's belief system and attachment relationships highlights that need for multicultural awareness. Such awareness should include consideration of risk and protective factors that affect resilience for culturally diverse students and subsequently support academic success.

Risk and Protective Factors Influencing Resilience

Fraser, Richman, and Galinsky (1999) define *resilience* as a context dependent description of an individual's ability to adapt and succeed in times of adversity. Luthar, Cicchetti, and Becker (2000) encourage thoughtful consideration of the exposure to threat and adversity, and the ability to positively adapt, as separate conditions necessary to understand resilience. While the transition to college can be difficult for all students, the way the transition is defined is purely subjective. Some students may see the transition as a difficult but positive experience and welcome the challenges while others may experience the transition as a more traumatic experience riddled with

adversity. Supporting the value and growth of resilience research requires cross-disciplinary attention to subcultural groups (Luthar, 1999) and to the ways that resilience can be achieved at different times, and with different visible end points, throughout the life cycle (Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000).

Scholarship on resilience with culturally diverse groups has brought attention to the need for increased awareness regarding racial/ethnic identity, racial discrimination, and microaggression on college campuses (Forrest-Bank & Jenson, 2015; Juang, Ittel, Hoferichter, & Gallarin, 2016). Within the context of higher education these factors are most closely related to academic self-efficacy for culturally diverse students. Forrest-Bank and Jenson (2015) reference Jenson and Fraser's (2011) definition of *risk factors* as, "individuals, school, peer, family, and community influences that increase the likelihood that a young person will experience behavioral, social, or emotional health problems" (p. 66). Conversely, *protective factors* are circumstances or traits that decrease the probability of an individual experiencing a negative outcome while experiencing adverse conditions (Forrest-Bank & Jenson, 2015).

Studies of risk and protective factors usually look at macro-level themes regarding discrimination and rarely consider the effects of racial discrimination and ethnic identity related to interpersonal dynamics and actions involved in the discriminatory acts (Forrest-Bank & Jenson, 2015). For students who participate in campus organizations that focus on cultural identification with a group, ethnic identity may serve as a protective factor. However, in consideration of the multicultural experiences of TCKs, ethnic identity may be considered a risk factor that exacerbates stress and discourages social engagement. An example of this can be seen with a

Chinese-American student who grew up in Jamaica. While he may feel more culturally connected to the activities offered by the Caribbean Student Association on campus, he may have reservations about participating due to perceived discrimination. Pascoe and Richman (2009) explain that perceived judgement and unfair treatment serve as a deterrent even if occurring in subtle forms as microaggression. Giving meaning to the college years as a period of personal growth coincides with what Phinney (1992) stresses as an important time of understanding identity development where individuals in their twenties define themselves and derive meaning from their ethnic identity. Arnett (2000) describes this period of emerging adulthood as a time of relative independence from societal norms and expectations where life's possibilities are explored, with importance given to love, work, and worldviews. For TCK's, the experience of living abroad allows for that exploration and level of independence prior to the college years resulting in early maturity and delayed adolescence simultaneously. Pollock and Van Reken (2001) explain that early maturity can be attributed to a broad base of knowledge and awareness related to global events and politics whereas, delayed adolescence is attributed to the TCKs struggle with personal identity, relationship building, and decision making. Forrest-Bank and Jenson (2015) encourage further study of the relationships between ethnic identity, microaggression, and academic success to inform policy development that supports the college setting as a place where the roles and responsibilities of adulthood are established.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Research Design

This retrospective narrative inquiry aimed to elicit meanings Adult Third Culture Kids (ATCKs) attribute to college experiences with particular interest to resilience, risk, and protective factors that may facilitate academic success. Daiute and Lightfoot (2004) explain the use of narrative as a collaboration of cultural values and personal subjectivities organized to express experiences and knowledge. This approach is further supported by Freeman's (2004) clarification that narrative is a way to provide meaning to emotional and evocative language for deeper understanding, and not explanation.

Connelly and Clandinin (1990) describe storytelling as an innate act of the human condition because people lead storied lives through individual and social experiences. The use of narrative inquiry on educational experiences has increased in the social sciences because of its focus on quality of life, as observed in narrative storytelling. Hogan (1988) emphasizes the importance of research relationships that incorporate equality, caring, mutual purpose, and intention. Using a cultural perspective, D'Andrade (1987) explains narrative inquiry as a powerful tool for the exploration of cultural models of relationships and goals that inform the human experience.

Sampling and Recruitment

Purposive sampling was used to recruit participants through alumni associations of international schools accredited by the Council of International Schools (CIS), social media groups, and Internet forums for TCKs. Participants were recruited to represent

the four sub-groups of TCKs identified by Pollock and Van Reken (2001) as *Traditional Third Culture Kids*, and colloquially referred to as *foreign service kids*, *corporate brats*, *missionary kids*, and *military brats*. These four groups are representative of the professional roles of their parents, and living with their parents, and can be described as follows:

- i. Foreign Service Kids-The children of state department employees working in embassy or consulate roles worldwide.
- ii. Corporate Brats-The children of international business employees assigned the foreign post of a corporation.
- iii. Missionary Brats-The children of church members serving a religious mission overseas.
- iv. Military Brats-The children of active duty service members stationed outside of the United States for a tour of duty.

As anticipated, snowball sampling was also employed to recruit additional participants through participant referral because participants would be able to identify TCKs that met the sub-group criteria with which they self-identified. While Padgett (2008) recommends a minimum sample size of 10 participants for qualitative data collection, the goal for this study was a minimum of 12 with equal representation of all four TCK sub-groups.

Inclusion Criteria:

Adult Third Culture Kids (ATCKs) 30 years of age and older that lived outside of the United States (their passport culture) for a minimum of 2 years between the ages of 12

and 19. The age range of 12-19 allows for the periods of middle school and high school taking into account grade 13 for students completing academic requirements like International Baccalaureates (IB), General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), and A-Level curriculums. No maximum participant age limit was set. The minimum participant age of 30 was chosen because participants were asked to reflect on their college experiences and this age allows for a sufficient gap in time where life experiences and relationships may have served to inform adult perspectives. Theoretically, this age is directly related to the completion of emerging adulthood, focused on the exploration of life's possibilities while relatively free from normative expectations and societally prescribed roles (Arnett, 2000). Erikson (1963) described this period as the commencement of early adulthood, during which individual development is focused on Generativity versus Stagnation and driven by a desire to guide future generations. Kroger (2000) explains that while this period is heavily influenced by parenting experiences, significant importance is also placed on contributions toward the life of a community and society.

The host country must be distinctly different in all areas such as language, religion, customs, and traditions from those of the participant's passport country. Weaver (1986) identified these descriptors as *surface culture* identifiers that immediately differentiate an individual from the host culture while *deep culture* descriptors are the beliefs and values that later inform thought processes and are invisible, and thus impossible to measure as a criterion for participation.

The individual must have repatriated to the United States for a period of at least one year to attend college. Individuals who transferred to schools outside of the US, or returned to the host country, after a year of repatriation will be included in the study as their experiences may provide insight regarding attrition.

The individual must have completed a four-year undergraduate studies program and earned a degree. Fulfillment of undergraduate degree does not have to be at a university in the United States if the individual attended the first year in the passport country. Limits for the length of time it took to complete the undergraduate program will not be set.

Exclusion Criteria:

Participants who pursued undergraduate degrees through virtual/online programs were excluded due to their inability to provide information regarding campus life. Participants with a parent whose ethnicity is shared with the host country were also excluded from participation. (e.g., a student who was raised in Japan and attended an international school whose father is Caucasian and mother is of Japanese descent.) While such participants may identify with TCKs, they are not considered a TCK by the definition used in this dissertation research due to the possibility of a cultural connection to the country through a parent, and may be more accurately identified by researchers as Cross-Cultural Kids (CCK) even if they personally identify as a TCK (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001).

Human Subject Research/IRB

This study poses minimal risk to the participants of this study as they are not members of vulnerable populations. This study does not pose a risk more severe than those encountered in everyday life, as outlined by Padgett (2008). However, as identifying information was collected, actions were taken to ensure the confidentiality of participants. Only the researcher saw identifying information provided during qualitative data collection, and the researcher de-identified the information for analysis and dissemination to assure participant anonymity. Participants were invited to select a pseudonym for use throughout data collection, analysis, and dissemination. When sharing data analysis with mentors or others for the purpose of seeking assistance with coding and conceptualization, only information that had been de-identified was shared. The researcher sought IRB approval from the University of Pennsylvania to ensure all standards of ethical practice were met.

Recruitment

Recruitment and data collection commenced once the University of Pennsylvania's Institutional Review Board approved the protocol (appendix A). Study advertisements were posted on TCK social media sites and disseminated through Council of International Schools accredited international school alumni group emails (appendices B and C). These announcements included contact information for the primary researcher and interested participants were asked to email the researcher to express interest. Following initial contact, potential participants were emailed a copy of the consent form (appendix D) for review and a telephone screening was scheduled.

Then, the interviewer completed a brief telephone screening to ensure that they meet all inclusion criteria. During the screening process the primary researcher elicited and answered questions about the consent form and participation in the study. Interested participants were offered an opportunity to schedule a time for the face to face interview or to complete the interview directly following the telephone screening. At the start of the interview, information outlining the purpose of the study and confidentiality were once again reviewed.

Data Collection

Data collection was conducted using semi-structured interview questions to elicit dialogue and natural expression of thoughts, ideas, and images through storytelling to a natural point of ending (Moustakas, 1990). The researcher, in collaboration with mentors, created, tested, and refined a semi-structured, standardized interview guide to elicit stories and meanings of being a TCK and the transitions associated with pursuing an undergraduate degree.

The interview guide (Appendix E) was developed to capture a holistic perspective of the TCK experience as it relates to educational attainment. The background questions were developed to understand the participants' cross cultural experiences of living outside of the United States and how that upbringing was perceived and internalized. The second section of the interview guide addressed the decision making process involved with school choice and transition. Lastly, the third section of the interview guide focused on academic performance through exploration of factors that contribute to engagement and withdrawal.

Face-to face interviews were carried out over Zoom, a secure and encrypted virtual platform with recording capabilities. All data was stored in a private password-protected file on a password-protected computer. Audio files were transcribed, transcription was checked for accuracy and note inflection, and audio files were reviewed independent of transcription for immersion in language. Following transcription, recorded files were destroyed.

Data Analysis

A combination of heuristic analysis and procedures of grounded theory were used during data collection, coding, and interpretation. Heuristic analysis emphasizes the collaborative relationship between researcher and participant to ensure accurate interpretation of the participant's story. Riley and Hawe (2005) explain that the researcher must develop accountability mechanisms to ensure that the interpretive framework applied to data analysis is robust and minimally influenced by the researcher's position in the study. To refrain from influencing data interrogation and interpretation, Moustakas (1990) believes researchers with connections to the phenomenon being studied must engage in a systematic process of introspection throughout data collection and analysis.

Combining the importance of research relationships, mutual empathy, and a research process that increases depth in understanding for the participant and the researcher, Moustakas (1990) developed a systematic form of heuristic narrative analysis. This process of analysis centers on the belief that the participant and researcher are collaborating through mutual effort and self-inquiry to uncover

knowledge of a shared phenomenon. The five stages of analysis used for this study are as follows: *Initial Engagement*, *Complete Immersion*, *Incubation*, *Illumination*, and *Explication* (Kudeva, 2015).

- i. *Initial Engagement* is the preliminary stage of awareness where the researcher identifies their connection to, and experience with, a phenomenon and acknowledges the need to derive further meaning for one's self and others (Moustakas, 1990).
- ii. *Complete Immersion* is an introspective process about the aspects of the phenomenon that drive the researcher's interest and passion for the topic. The researcher engages in self-examination and reflection to gain understanding of their experience while becoming immersed in literature about the topic (Moustakas, 1990).
- iii. *Incubation* is a period of growth where the researcher's understanding of the topic has expanded, and likely been altered or transformed, through knowledge acquired from researching the topic and gaining new understandings about the phenomenon. Moustakas (1990) explains this stage as one of, "nourishment, support, and care that produces a creative awareness of some dimension of a phenomenon or a creative integration of its parts or qualities" (p. 29).
- iv. *Illumination* is a process that occurs organically as information about the phenomenon adds to the researcher's understanding and new themes emerge. This stage is dependent upon the researcher's ability to be receptive to the stories being shared to uncover hidden meanings. Moustakas (1990)

stresses the importance of this stage by stating that it is at this point in the analysis that, “missed, misunderstood, or distorted realities make their appearance and add something essential to the truth of an experience” (p. 30).

- v. *Explication* is the process of uniting the themes that have emerged from the individual stories to explore new levels of meaning. This stage relies on the deeper exploration of the dominant themes to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon.

Using procedures of grounded theory, line-by-line coding of twelve transcripts was completed separately by this researcher and a non-TCK coding assistant to establish a preliminary list of codes, define, and categorize them, to develop a codebook. Charmaz (2014) explains that line-by-line coding ensures critical analysis of data by preventing immersion in the participant’s world views that may skew data towards meeting assumptions and not towards the discovery of patterns and new insights. To refine the codebook and test its efficacy all transcripts were reviewed a second time to determine whether understanding could be gained through deeper exploration of primary codes. A third round of coding used to compare specific incidents related to the collegiate experience and focused on coding for a priori themes. Charmaz (2014) encourages coding incident with incident for deeper exploration of concepts identified through previous coding within an particular experience. The use of this coding method was specifically for the purpose of exploring the concepts of motivation and resilience.

Reflexivity Statement

As a social worker who self-identifies as an Adult Third Culture Kid (ATCK) this research study was driven by the awareness of my own challenges as an undergraduate college student who repatriated for the sole purpose of attending university. Twenty years after the completion of my undergraduate studies, I am surprised that in our highly globalized society the term Third Culture Kid is still relatively unknown. As I began to develop this dissertation research I was encouraged by my committee to explore my own story as a TCK who repatriated for higher education. Reflecting on my experiences I realized that by answering the questions I would be posing to participants of my study I'd gain understanding of the process of narrative development that I would be asking them to undergo. As an exercise in introspection I reflected on the way that I viewed the TCK experience and the meaning I had given to my own undergraduate student experience. During the research process I frequently returned to my own story recognizing that bias always exists in research and must be continually acknowledged and addressed in all areas throughout the course of the study (Padgett, 2008). Awareness of my own biases encouraged the use of a heuristic approach for analysis to ensure trustworthiness and rigor throughout this qualitative exploration.

Trustworthiness/Rigor

From time of conception the trustworthiness and rigor of this study were of utmost importance. Due to the scarcity of TCK research, and this researchers commitment to accurately represent the experiences of this culturally diverse group,

detailed accounts of methods and processes were employed. Padgett (2008) explains that rigor in qualitative studies is demonstrated through accountability. In regard to trustworthiness, attempts were made to mitigate researcher and respondent biases throughout data collection and analysis through the use of a system of checks and balances influenced by Moustakas' (1990) heuristic approach of reflection. These included mentorship, peer debriefing, introspective work addressing researcher identity and bias, maintenance of a detailed audit trail, and collaboration with a non-TCK coding assistant professionally trained as a linguistic analyst, during data analysis.

This researcher reflected upon and shared her TCK experiences with the dissertation committee, through discussion of research interests and assignments that were part of the DSW program coursework. This allowed for a deeper understanding of the researchers experiences and interests in unexplored areas of the TCK experience that motivated development of the study. During the data collection process the researcher refrained from sharing TCK status until after the interview, and then only if asked by participants, in order to minimize respondent bias and encourage authentic narrative. Regular meetings were scheduled with members of the dissertation committee who are seasoned qualitative social work researchers for debriefing and support. Peer debriefing was used as a means for identifying concepts and themes that may have been overlooked during data analysis due to prolonged immersion. Observer triangulation, as outlined by Padgett (2008), was used to include diverse perspectives in the interpretation of data, and to assess the need for study modifications needed to elicit rich narratives. This was carried out through the collaboration of a non-TCK coding assistant working with this researcher to examine data. While prolonged engagement

with participants was not feasible due to time constraints, participants were asked to share insight that may have been triggered by the researchers TCK self-disclosure following the face to face interview. All processes were tracked using an audit trail and were regularly reviewed with the dissertation committee for accountability and transparency.

CHAPTER 4

Findings and Analysis

Organization of Findings

The purpose of this narrative inquiry was to gain understanding about the factors that contribute to the academic success of Third Culture Kids (TCKs). The findings were derived from the information collected through twelve semi-structured interviews with participants who self-identified as TCKs. Codes that emerged coalesced around the theme *Understanding the Self* and concepts related to the *Connection to Others*. Codes were categorized under the following thematic concepts: (1) understanding identity and perceptions of self; (2) defining home through that which fosters a sense of emotional stability; (3) developmental disconnection; (4) growth and permanence through meaningful attachments; and (5) the significance of connections within college choice. Discussion of these themes will include quotes and phrases for deeper understanding of the experiences and perceptions of the participants.

Description of Research Participants

Participants were initially recruited to represent the four sub-groups of TCKs (*foreign service kids-FS, corporate brats-CB, missionary kids-MK, and military brats-MB*) classified by the Pollock and Van Reken (2001). During recruitment, the call for participants yielded a more diverse group than anticipated and modifications were made to include their rich narratives. Various aspects of the TCK experience were engulfed by a distinctiveness that made it impossible to cleanly categorize participants into the previously defined categories. The most prominent features were the way in which

TCKs identify their passport country affiliation, cultural affiliation, and the reason for their international upbringing. Three examples of this are the American birth abroad, the unknown holder of American citizenship, and the green card holder who was raised as an American citizen. Sampling strategy modifications were also made to include participants who identified with the surface culture identifiers of the host country. Spanish speaking participants explained that knowledge of the language in a host country did not protect them from the challenges of being an outsider and the development of their unique third culture. All four sub-groups were not equally represented within the 12 participants but recruitment was discontinued due to data saturation.

Four men and eight women ranging in age from 22 to 42 completed the interview (Table 1). Nine were married, one was engaged, and two were single. All participants disclosed that they had completed additional coursework after obtaining their undergraduate degrees and several had completed graduate programs, including doctoral studies. Ten participants completed undergraduate studies uninterrupted and two participants withdrew from their undergraduate programs and returned to a different university to complete undergraduate coursework after several years.

Table 1: Participant Demographics and TCK Sub-Group Identification
(foreign service kids-FS, corporate brats-CB, missionary kids-MK, and military brats-MB)

<i>Participant Psuedonym</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>TCK Sub-group (Pollock and Van Reken, 2001)</i>	<i>TCK sub-group identified by participant (in their own words)</i>
Fernando	34	CB	"My mother was an international school teacher."
Isabel	45	MB	"I grew up part of a military family (dad)".
Marco	32	FS	"I'm a diplomat TCK."
Kimberly	37	CB	"My dad was a teacher for the dependents of military [in Japan]."
Consuelo	32	CB	"We moved for my dad's job [to South America]."
Sally	36	MB	"I grew up in a military family, my dad was career airforce."
Jacob	33	CB	"My parents were indentured servants [in South America]."
Sakura	42	CB	"My dad jumped into a Japanese company."
Elizabeth	33	MK	"My parents were missionaries in West Africa."
Diana	37	CB	"[My dad] applied for jobs out of the country...so we moved."
Mark	22	MK	"We moved as missionaries to [Africa]. I was just a kid following along."
Brittney	25	MK	"My parents went [over to China] as American Professors."

Passport Affiliation vs. Cultural Affiliation

During the screening process several participants challenged the study's inclusion criteria, originally developed using TCK definitions outlined by Pollock and Van Reken (2001). They disclosed emotional disconnectedness between passport affiliation and cultural affiliation toward the United States thus prompting this researcher to include their rich narratives during data collection. The screening process for this study exposed how passport identification and connection to the culture of the United States must be viewed as two different concepts: the legal tie through citizenship and the emotional tie through cultural connectedness. Throughout data collection and later during narrative analysis, participant narratives revealed a division of the participants into two groups; those who identified with the United States as their passport country but felt culturally disconnected and those who felt a strong connection to American culture but were disconnected through passport affiliation.

Participants who felt culturally disconnected identified their passport affiliation and quickly sought validation asking, “That makes me American right,” or “I guess that makes me American?” When asked to explain why they felt unsure or needed confirmation they expressed feelings of uncertainty because of the lack of emotional connection toward the United States. These participants further shared that decisions to leave the United States following completion of undergraduate education were directly related to this emotional disconnectedness and the need to discover where they belonged culturally. Several participants described how they sought to find these connections by taking a break from their undergraduate studies. The break allowed them to explore their need for cultural connectedness and simultaneously reinforced the benefits of completing their studies to increase employment opportunities available to them overseas.

One participant explained how her feelings of emotional disconnection led her overseas to two previous host countries where she had felt most grounded and emotionally intact. She believed returning would help her to identify that which was missing in her life following her repatriation to attend college. However, to her surprise, the trip was life altering as she became aware that she did not have to identify with any specific culture. She was free to acknowledge her experiences but did not have to own any one culture in order to feel emotionally complete. This awareness made it clear to her that the only place she would be able to live with this cultural fluidity would be within an expat community.

ATCKs who had spent the majority of their upbringing within a host culture explained how campus life was viewed as an opportunity to learn about the American

culture they had minimal to no contact with growing up. It was an opportunity to understand American culture, learn about their monoculture peers, and form new connections. Participants shared how their experience of campus life had felt like a microcosm of the larger American culture of the United States. For some, these experiences led to the comfort and re-affirmation of religious/spiritual connections to others. For a second group it reinforced the importance of connection to a culturally diverse community. For the last group it reinforced the marginalization and oppression associated with racial identifiers.

Participants who identified with American culture but felt disconnected through passport affiliation explained that their status of citizenship had been blurred during their upbringing. One participant was born to American parents abroad, granting him American citizenship while growing up overseas. Another was unaware for most of his life that his American birth to foreign parents qualified him for American citizenship. A third participant shared how his current pursuit of American citizenship is directly related to his upbringing within a community of expat American citizens in a foreign country and within an American educational system overseas. He explained how he had been raised as an American citizen in all aspects while lacking official passport status and as such he culturally identified as an American.

All three of these participants shared challenges associated with the uncertainty surrounding their passport status but verbalized strong connections to American culture. Upon critical analysis of their narratives it was clear they had connected with the *melting pot* aspects stereotypical of American culture. All three shared stories of how they had formed connections within multicultural communities in the United States following their

time living abroad and how connections to these communities aligned with their expectations of American culture within the college setting. Feeling they had successfully acclimated to life in the United States, they denied the need to return overseas to a host country. When asked about the conditions under which they might consider a move overseas the most common factor was related to the political climate of the United States and immigration policies.

Another area that helped elucidate the differences between passport and cultural affiliation was the reason that the TCKs were moved to a host country. While Pollock and Van Reken (2001) outlined four subgroups of TCKs (*foreign service kids-FS*, *corporate brats-CB*, *missionary kids-MK*, and *military brats-MB*) participant demographic information suggested that these sub-groups didn't accurately represent the way they self-identified. Several participants met the criteria for more than one sub-group while others saw themselves as a combination of sub-group criteria.

Reason for International Upbringing

For the majority of participants the international upbringing was not as easily definable. Many had lived in a host country at such a young age that they viewed primary rather than a host culture. One participant explained that the sub-group *corporate brats* was meant to represent the children of international business people who had the support of their employers/corporations. More simply, *corporate brats* lived in a foreign country with access to many of the comforts of their passport country, opportunities to travel to the passport country during their time overseas, and readily developed support communities of others employed by the same corporate sponsor.

One participant shared how he was born and grew up in a host country, which he identified as *home*, due to parental emigration following a period of indentured servitude. Under the established TCK sub-groups he would be considered a *corporate brat* but nothing about his upbringing was related to international business or corporate relocation.

Other participants shared how they, too, were unable to clearly identify with the established sub-groups because of their upbringing in a foreign country to parents who were ethnically different from one another and who chose to raise their children within a culture that neither identified with. These participants didn't have corporate sponsors and were raised in a host culture where local companies employed their parents. This type of structure encouraged deeper immersion with the host culture and greater separation from the passport country.

A third group of participants identified with a combination of sub-groups. Several were children of American civilians working on military installations overseas or missionary kids who lived overseas with parents who worked in international business prior to their relocation to a new host country where the family was called to serve a mission. These participants identified with a combination of sub-group affiliations based on access to and immersion within the host culture, demonstrating how increased globalization and opportunities for overseas employment may have altered the definitiveness of the traditional sub-groups used to identify TCKs. The diversity in participants and TCK experiences not only justified making changes to study methodology, they brought attention to the need for exploration of TCK experiences outside the parameters set by Pollock and Van Reken (2001).

Understanding the Self

"I don't consider myself Venezuelan. I don't consider myself Chinese either. I barely speak the language...I just eat a lot of rice." (Jacob)

Understanding Identity

As a way to understand how participants self-identified as TCKs, they were asked to share the criteria they felt identified them as part of this group. The theme of *Understanding Identity* emerged when participants expressed the challenges associated with attempts to relate to monocultural peers in the college setting. While the details of their responses varied greatly, they all included aspects of the way they saw themselves in comparison to others; the way they were viewed by others and the way in which their multicultural experiences informed the way they viewed others.

I. *Expected Identity.*

This perception of the self is bi-directional and driven by assumptions influenced by racial stereotypes, societal expectations, and in the case of TCKs, cross-cultural awareness. Isabel explained how her experiences growing up in a diverse international community had shielded her from experiencing the marginalization and oppression her African American peers so strongly identified with and as a result she was told, "you're not representing black people." Similarly, Elizabeth experienced the assigning of her expected identity when she was ridiculed for her strong ties to the African culture she was raised in. She explained, "they made fun of me actually. They called me the white African sometimes."

Jacob found that university staff and faculty struggled to understand TCKs and explained how demographic information is used in a way that doesn't always accurately represent students like him stating, "we're just not... don't just throw a cultural background you think that will unite us." Conversely, participants also shared ways they had assigned an expected identity on others based on their own cross-cultural experiences and first-hand knowledge of host cultures. Jacob explained how he had expected Latino students raised in the United States to be like his friends in South America and was surprised by the differences in values and cultural norms. This became more evident as he tried to connect with students who shared his Chinese heritage stating,

When I tried going to the Asian Cultural Society the first thing I noticed was that there were a lot of Asian Americans. And, the feeling around them was completely different from the feeling I have from internationals. We had a term we called them, *ABC*, American Born Chinese...they were very American... their values are different, the way they speak, what they consider important.

Elizabeth also shared these feelings explaining, "There was a few African-Americans at my school and I tried to be friends with them for a while, but I quickly realized that African-American culture is not Africa." Participants shared how these experiences of cultural confusion challenged them to evaluate other ways TCKs view identity.

II. ***Passport Identity.***

Participants explained how their geographical disconnection from the United States had influenced the way they view a part of their identity as being solely related to legal

documentation and not to a deeper connection with the culture. Though they had expectations for affinity, these were rarely born out in their time spent in the States. In Kimberly's case she had spent brief periods of summer vacation in her parents' home state but did not feel an emotional attachment. Kimberly explained this disconnect stating, "I visited the US, spent summers there, but that doesn't really give you an idea. Like being in a place on vacation doesn't tell you what it's gonna be like to live at a place." This is a concept that she continues to explore as she lives overseas and considers pursuing dual citizenship in her new host country. Similarly, Consuelo shared how her lack of exposure to American culture and sole connection through a parent resulted in her passport identity explaining, "My mom was basically my one sample size of the United States. I have a passport. I'm American right?" A perspective shared by Elizabeth after her parents return from an Africa mission, "So I'm American. My passport is American... I think when my parents left the Africa fields, it meant that I was not from there anymore."

III. ***Educational Identity.***

Participants discussed development of an identity associated with educational experiences and opportunities, grounded in the value of education and to the concept that education is both universally valued and cannot be taken away. Fernando explained how his cross-cultural experiences had shaped his views regarding education stating, "There was a higher emphasis placed on the education, on the value of it. Because I think a lot of us understood what the world is like when you don't have it." The idea that education is something of which you have ownership, a commodity that

cannot be taken away translated into something by which to define the self. Participants shared how educational identity gives absolute meaning to the self within a life system that lacks consistency and permanence. Marco explained that the sense of pride and personal accomplishment associated with educational accomplishments fueled this identity, but was often off-putting to others, stating, "We were always a little bit snobby. We looked down on American schools. Academically I always felt very well prepared for college." Participants reported they were often accused of, or thought they might be bragging, but the majority also explained that it is an identity that goes hand-in-hand with the identity they feel most connected to, the *Ambiguous Identity*.

IV. ***Ambiguous Identity***.

This unifying identity defined the self as an ambiguous amalgamation of diverse experiences, multicultural perspectives, and culturally informed meaningful relationships. Mark explained that the ambiguous identity, "is just another aspect of my personality that enables me to see things differently because of the experiences and cultures that I have grown up in." This identity grows from and yields insight into the way TCKs internalize deep culture identifiers from their host country experiences. Kimberly perceived her ambiguous identity as being culturally fluid and lacking constraints stating, "I definitely don't feel ownership of any of the cultures that I belong to or have lived in," but rather moves between them and combines them as needed within a variety of settings and geographical locations. Jacob discussed how the aspects of cultural fluidity and ambiguity are exactly what identify the uniqueness of this identity stating, "We unite under a different umbrella. We're united under our own sets of issues." Isabel

explained that while the factors that contribute to the development of this identity are grounded in inclusion and an understanding of differences, many TCKs choose to hide this identity upon return to the passport country in an attempt to fit in with monocultural peers stating, “You can’t talk about where you’ve been or you’re bragging. Unless you’re in a group of people who travel and they know.”

Connections to Others

“Part of being a TCK is just being invested in people, and really investing in relationships where you have them.” (Mark)

Home

The conceptualization of *home* for TCKs is based on that which fosters a sense of emotional support and stability where authenticity and understanding of the self is encouraged. Participants explained that the idea of home had been difficult to conceptualize concretely because it was fraught with transition and instability. This concept first emerged throughout the interviews as a way for participants to attempt meaningful connections with the passport culture. During questioning of the college experience the concept of home began to shift from a concept of physical grounding to one of emotional engagement. Participants shared how they came to understand *home* through meaningful relationships and self-exploration unrelated to place and solely focused on emotional sustenance.

I. Spousal Relationships

Through the deep connections formed with a romantic partner the sense of home emerged from the sense of stability offered through the commitment to another. Jacob describes the awareness of home as, “ A sense of belonging. Because I'm married, home is where my heart is. So because I'm married, I've finally settled down. I finally feel like, Oh, this is home.” He went on to clarify that feeling settled is not related to a place but to the commitment he and his spouse have made to each other. Feeling unbounded to a physical place, are considering a move to a new host country. Likewise, Brittany explained how she had struggled to conceptualize *home* as a place, assigning the title to places she had lived in for brief periods and places where she had attended school. The geography of home was transient. Eventually she came to understand the support she received from her husband during their period of courtship and later during their marriage best defined the concept of *her home*. She explained, “Right now where I am in life, my home is with my husband wherever he happens to be.” She articulated the perception that home is not confined by location but by the spousal relationship through mutual commitment and support. However, Brittney explained that this concept of home had evolved from the connections she had with her family throughout her internationally mobile childhood, a view shared by other participants in their journey to understand the concept of home.

II. Familial Relationships

Sakura explained how the peripatetic lifestyle of TCKs can lead to the strengthening of familial relationships in response to shared experiences and adversity. Sharing her

insights regarding the conceptualization of home as a product of shared challenges she explained,

As a family unit we were so close, because there's something about arriving somewhere that's totally, totally foreign, and all you have is each other, and I think a big piece of my sibling relationship was that... my brother in particular, that relationship was set in Japan really strongly, and my parents... my family was such a strong relationship and continues to be, that maybe that helped me weather the storm of leaving friends and making new friends.

The way she describes home through strong familial relationships has informed the way she and her spouse are choosing to raise their children as next generation TCKs.

However, she clarifies that the conceptualization of home for her developed out of a desire to understand normalcy in her role as a TCK struggling to identify the self.

III. *Pursuing Normalcy*

The pursuit of normalcy was the attempt to find one's place within the passport culture. Participants shared how repatriation had challenged their expectations of the United States and American culture. A place where their identity was challenged, they were misunderstood by others, and struggled to find emotional grounding. Seeking self-actualization through the deeper understanding of experiences helped define the concept of home for participants like Sakura, who had struggled to identify her place within the blurred lines of the ambiguous identity. Sakura explained that the pursuit of normalcy helped her define home as an emotional grounding of acceptance instead of a physical location. When asked about the process of growing awareness she explained

that, “[Home is] a lot of places of nowhere. It's been a reorientation of, 'I don't have a home and actually that's okay, and I'm not rooted, and actually that's okay.’” Brittany shared similar views regarding her search for normalcy and the factors that contribute to her pursuit of a home. She explained,

[Home is] where I feel like I can be myself. Where I don't have to, I don't know, hide anything. I can be whoever I want to be. I can be comfortable, I can feel safe, and for me it's also more of the people that I'm with.

Reinforcing the importance of connection over location and physical place, participants shared how the conceptualization of home is inclusive of others who may not share a commitment in the spousal and familial sense but share a connection through shared experiences.

IV. ***Community***

Participants explained how they had found a sense of home within groups of others who shared outsider experiences within a dominant culture. The connections established through shared experiences of being and living with difference fostered emotional grounding and stability. Kimberly shared how her awareness of this connection prior to attending university could have informed her decisions regarding college choice and repatriation by stating,

I definitely have a lot more in common with people who have had vastly different experiences and where they've lived and what kind of lives they've had. But we have the shared experience of not growing up in our cultures.

She went on to explain that the decision to attend graduate school outside of the United States was directly related to this awareness and her need to search for home as an adult. As such, she returned to Germany and the expat community that she had identified as “home”.

Other participants shared how the sense of community as a way to understand home came as a surprise and transitioned to an important place of stability throughout the college years and later into adulthood. Isabel explained how her need for community led her to prioritize diversity as a factor influencing college choice. She explained, how her definition of community meant being part of a racially diverse group and as such she, “ chose a college that was very diverse. So there were people there from all kinds of backgrounds and it was kind of a melting pot again.” In time she realized that her definition of diversity did not align with the definition of diversity on her college campus and as a result she immediately sought to leave the United States and return to the community of expats she felt represented her idea of home. Jacob shared a similar story of the way he sought to find a sense of home through community in the college setting living in a dorm that focused on international students and those interested in culturally diverse experiences. It was within this community that he formed connections that fostered a sense of stability needed during the college years and into adulthood. Sakura shared how failed attempts to establish connections during her college years brought about the realization that her community, and sense of home, was not in the United States stating, “ I think the things that were always striking to me were that I feel most comfortable outside of the United States, in an immigrant community.”

Uneven Development

Exploration into the concept of *home* brought attention to the reason for which TCKs sought out a place of stability and grounding. Participant narratives showed a disconnect between the way they viewed acquisition of knowledge and skills in comparison to their monocultural peers as they entered the college setting and the theme of *Uneven Development* emerged from the data. While TCKs are exposed to diverse cultural experiences during their time in host countries, this can come at the cost of acquiring critical life skills and learning to navigate social and interpersonal experiences. On one hand, participants perceived greater global engagement in history, politics, and perspective compared to their monocultural peers. They could navigate international spaces and dynamics with grace and facility. On the other, they lacked critical knowledge regarding age-appropriate living skills needed for transition to the college setting. Fernando provided clarification of the disconnect regarding acquisition of independent living skills:

There's a whole host of other abilities that you just don't get living in countries that are going through political upheaval. We completely missed out on the experience of being teenagers with part-time jobs... a host of us didn't drive because we were targets for kidnapping... a bureaucracy was something that was very foreign to us, so there wasn't even any kind of paperwork accountability that standard teens learn how to do.

Participants agreed that the disconnection of skills and awareness was one of the most difficult challenges to overcome throughout the college experience. While they could engage in thoughtful discourse with professors, they struggled to relate to monocultural

peers in a meaningful way.

I. ***Sheltered and Not Sheltered***

Participants explained how their TCK experiences, while culturally rich, were also burdened by fear and uncertainty related to international politics. This fear was directly related to their personal experiences with civil war, kidnapping, and political upheaval. Jacob disclosed how his international upbringing was the result of his parents fleeing economic depression at a young age and entering indentured servitude in South America. Following the conclusion of contractual work agreements of servitude they were able to settle down and start a family. Jacob shared his parents' story without emotional tenor, and under the assumption that this is an experience easily understood by others. When discussing his decision to leave South America to attend university in the United States he nonchalantly shared how the decision was spurred on by political events, stating:

The people elected a socialist leader, so we transitioned from a very elitist, political environment, to a very populous leader. We were talking about referendums... there were strikes... so, the economy was not good. We had recovered from two *saqueos* (looting incidents) ...this time they burned my mom's store down, and I was already 18... at that moment I was like, I have to get out of here... I can't be here...there is no way I can survive this anymore.

Much like Jacob, Elizabeth shared how her upbringing in Africa exposed her to aspects of international politics that TCK peers could relate to but monocultural peers responded to in disbelief. She explained how her boarding school was located in an

area where civil war had broken out and after evacuation by the French military her family had decided that she should finish her senior year of high school in the United States. Once, in a local, public American school, she understood that she viewed the world through a globally informed lens, Yet, she struggled with independent living skills her monocultural peers had mastered. She explained this disconnection as,

[being] very experienced in issues of poverty, and world governments, and corruption of power, and all those kind of like big ideas, but day-to-day living I wasn't as well prepared... I grew up strangely sheltered and not sheltered.

In this juxtaposition between deep maturity around global politics and conflict paired with limited skills for independent living, participants reported feeling unprepared of how and where to exist in the world.

Investment

TCK identity and experiences are heavily shaped by feelings of impermanence and transience. Families may not have enough time in a location, or safety, to put down roots. As a result, Investment emerged as a theme through the exploration of peer relationships but expanded through the discussion of meaningful connections. These connections were easily identified in relation to individuals and groups but proved challenging when related to place. Regular movement between places left participants with few long term friendships. Relationships took on a unique quality in this highly transient population. Rather than a focus on shared interests and occupation of the same geographical space, common to monocultural and permanently situated peers, these TCKs discussed how relationships evolved through a mutual commitment to the

development of a meaningful relationships. Sally discussed the challenge of developing relationships as a TCK, stating, “it's hard to create friendships, or develop relationships as a Third Culture Kid because you're always wondering when is this going to end.”

I. *Peer Relationships*

Participant narratives showed how TCKs define meaningful peer relationships through the mutuality of effort given to connections with others. This is marked also, by caution in sharing aspects of their youth abroad for concern of appearing too different, being misunderstood, or in the interest of avoiding *expected identities*. Mark explained that he often refrains from sharing details of his international upbringing until he is certain the person asking is genuinely interested in getting to know him. He explains the importance given to peer relationships is directly related to the TCK experience stating that, “ part of being a TCK is just being invested in people, and really investing in relationships where you have them.” Since the period of time within a host culture can vary, the time spent with peers must be meaningful. Sally shared a similar perspective as she discussed the challenge of developing friendships in college stating: “it's hard to create friendships, or develop relationships as a Third Culture Kid because you're always wondering when is this going to end.” Only under circumstances of mutual effort can the risk to develop a meaningful connection be attempted.

II. *Group Affiliation*

When considering meaningful relationships on a larger scale, participants explained that *group affiliation* guaranteed a sense of investment because the range of

connections were based on shared belief systems, values, or traditions. Brittney explained how she viewed this level of connection grounded in a shared system of spiritual beliefs where, “no matter what country we grew up in, because we were all missionary kids(MKs) and going through this experience together, it just kind of brought us together.” Affiliating with a group of similarly experienced children and adolescents helped refine identities, normalize common challenges, and take pride in shared triumphs. Sakura shared a similar perspective for TCKs that value the unique nature of a nomadic lifestyle stating, “I feel a sense of belonging. It's sort of like finding all of the other people who don't belong, and then together we do it.” These participants identified as a group because they identified with no other group. The lack of affiliation became the foundation for their connection. For TCKs who feel their place in the world is transitional, the investment associated with permanence to place may be significantly more challenging to negotiate.

III. ***Homesteading***

Participants described *homesteading* as the act of geographical permanence resulting from the need to establish a physical home base. Their descriptions of meaningful connections to place showed the concept of *homesteading* to be seen with ambivalence, with the idea of permanence functioning as a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it is an opportunity to put down roots to develop of physically stable environment for raising children and a family. On the other hand, it involves leaving the nomadic lifestyle for one viewed as predictable and stagnant. Elizabeth explained this struggle stating, “The idea of staying in one place scares me a little bit, but I also very

much want to stay put, so it's a weird conflict.” Kimberly shared how changes in her family structure to include a new baby have driven her to consider the meaningful connections she’s developed with places outside of the United States, and most recently, her husband’s passport country, Finland. Kimberly verbalized her feelings of trepidation:

One of the scariest things of being married and living here and having a kid now is that I don't know if I'll ever move again...If I think of being in one place for the next 30 or 40 years or something, it kind of makes me panic.

Isabel shared similar feelings as she considered career decisions that would keep her in a host country for an extended period of time. She decided to leave one host country for another explaining that she, “absolutely loved it and stayed there 12 years. And the only reason I left is, I didn't want to *homestead*. It was time to go somewhere else.” While meaningful connections can be made with individuals and groups, the connection to place seems to be more easily negotiated when the aforementioned relationships are included. Jacob explained this in consideration of a move overseas stating,

Everywhere I go there's somebody who impacted my life... recently, [my wife] and I went to Taiwan, and we started considering, can we actually stay here? And, it was one of those times, I was actually considering like, Oh wait, I could retire here.

College Choice

Throughout the interview process participants discussed the factors that contributed to school choice. As they discussed these reasons, they articulated the belief that their decisions or these factors, were not unique to the third culture experience. Yet, examination of their narratives showed the theme of *college choice* was heavily grounded in the TCK experience. First, most made decisions that prized meaningful connections, including family, and friends in close geographic proximity. The importance of location enabled them to easily travel to the host country where their family remained and to visit friends from the host country that were attending universities nearby. Other factors integral to the TCK experience that shaped college choice included prior knowledge of perceived supports and affiliation to others basis of shared values.

I. *Ease of Travel*

Participants in this study discussed the ways travel facilitated ongoing relationships and investment and this extended to the college selection process. More specifically, students selected colleges close in proximity to where high school friends would be attending and within a reasonable distance for weekend travel. For example, Fernando explained how during his school search he realized that most of his TCK friends had chosen schools in the eastern United States stating,

It seems like all college bound third culture kids end up on the East Coast. We would devote a lot of time and resources to getting on the Greyhound and going from Boston to D.C., or D.C. to New York, or whatever and linking up.

While he didn't make the connection that school's geographic placement allowed him to maintain meaningful relationships with others, he did acknowledge that being in big cities made it easier for him to see each other often. Conversely, Jacob explained that the majority of his peers had moved to the east coast of the United States with the specific intent of staying connected stating,

Most of us moved to Miami, and New York [for college]... and it was because of Miami, they stayed in touch... the people in New York actually kept in touch so we meet at least once a month, and we make food, use any excuse to eat together... we're closer knit.

II. *Resources and Relationships: The importance of ongoing support networks*

Several participants shared how ease of travel had influenced school choice but ultimately the deciding factor was having a connection to the school through family or friends. These relationships allowed for immediate access to an established support system. Diana explained how the ease of travel helped to narrow down her choices, as she looked at schools in large cities with international airports; but ultimately she prioritized the connection her family had to both the school and the area stating,

So connections and growing up...it was a city I was comfortable with...easy to get home, less expensive....my grandmother and my great-grandmother had both gone to the women's college there...my mother had done her graduate work [there]... that's how I ended up there.

Similarly, Mark shared the importance of having an established support system stating,

It's close to where [my parents] live. I already had some friends, and a really best

friend, that's one of my cousins, that went here. He graduated high school the year before me, so he was here a year before I got here...he swayed me.

While Brittney didn't know anyone at the school chosen, she felt knowing her parents had professional connections and had attended the school provided her with a sense of support stating,

One of my dad's college friends actually was teaching at my school, and I got to meet her before I started school...she was kind of one of my contacts and she ended up being my professor several times too...that was kind of nice.

Participant narratives showed that these connections were also associated with a desire to be surrounded by others with whom they felt connected through personal beliefs and interests. Regardless of the career path they wanted to pursue, campus life had to meet requirements connected inclusion.

III. Seeking Affiliation

Isabel shared how she chose to leave the state where her parents had settled to attend a university that would offer her the opportunity to learn and live in a multicultural environment like the one in which she was raised. She explained her thought process stating, "I actually chose the college that I chose based on its diversity statistics." While this would later prove a challenge based on her definition of diversity, it was an attempt to seek the affiliation that had connected her to peers in her host country.

Other participants sought affiliation through the participation in communities with religious beliefs and affiliations of the institution. Brittany explained how her educational

history within Christian schools influenced her decision stating, “I grew up in a lot of Christian schools, I don't know how I would have done if it wasn't some sort of Christian school.” Similarly, Elizabeth shared how her university's affiliation with her religious denomination and her desire to be in that community provided her with a sense of stability, “being a missionary or being in the ministry was always so important and that was the path I also chose.”

Fernando explained how the challenges associated with his desire to be around students who shared his interests and beliefs led him to campus housing. After unsuccessful attempts to find sameness within campus organizations he found meaningful connections stating,

“[My dorm] was for people interested in being with international students. It was a mix of international students and American students interested in an international setting.”

The relationships formed and the inclusion he felt during his time there continued after completion of his undergraduate studies. Fernando explained how that support system remains intact and still serves to provide a sense of affiliation and meaningful connection with others.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion and Implications

The objectives of this dissertation were to understand the collegiate experiences of TCKs and answer the following questions in order to better understand the risk and protective factors associated with academic success for this group of unique individuals.

How do the experiences of being a TCK influence social and academic experiences in the college setting?

Where do TCKs find support during repatriation and the transition to college?

How do TCKs seek out and form meaningful connections during the undergraduate college years?

Risk and Protective Factors

Scholarship on resilience in higher education has focused on macro-level themes surrounding racial discrimination of culturally diverse groups with minimal consideration to individual experiences (Forest-Bank & Jensen, 2015). This study's exploration of risk and protective factors associated with the academic engagement of TCKs revealed an interdependence of self-identity awareness and meaningful connections. Study data suggest that entering higher education begins a period of personal growth and identity formation for TCKs and their monocultural peers alike. However, for TCKs, belief systems formed through extended periods of immersion in host cultures become difficult to negotiate in academic settings unprepared to meet the needs of multicultural students. Scholarship surrounding themes of racial discrimination examine factors that

contribute to ethnic identity development (Phinney, 1992) with no mention of factors or circumstances associated with the development of a cultural identity. Filling that gap, Hong et al. (2013) stress the importance of examining the support and protection against cultural adversity provided by connections developed through the cultural attachments of individuals with internationally mobile childhoods.

Understanding the Self and Connection to Others

Throughout this study, the ability to clearly identify their sense of self proved challenging for the study TCKs. While assumptions can be made that this challenge is related to being caught between cultures, the data suggest a different theory. Pollock and Van Reken (2001) introduced the concept of being a *cultural chameleon* but associated this concept with having a lack of cultural balance developed in response to continuous adaptation. While this explanation may be true for some TCKs, study participants' narratives suggested a more holistic understanding of the different cultures to which they were exposed. Rather than lacking cultural balance, their experience appears to reveal a fusion of multicultural awareness and beliefs provided by the opportunity to move freely within a variety of different groups.

The term *cultural chameleon* (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001) implies a sense of hiding in order to move comfortably within groups; but the data from this study suggest that, rather than "hiding" their status from others what may appear to be hiding can be seen as refraining to share certain personal information until the new cultural environments are better understood. Rather than experiencing a sense of hiding, they assess the new environment until they have a better grasp of the mores and present

aspects of the *ambiguous identity* that align closely with those of the new environment. Requiring a period of assessment illustrates how the absence of cultural competence results in imposition of a culture's beliefs and attitudes (Limberg & Lambie's, 2011), forcing use of the *cultural chameleon* persona as a protective mechanism. During this time the focus on identity development is overridden by the need to understand the new environment and determine the existence of possible connections. Walters and Auton-Cuff (2009) presented this as a negotiation of priorities necessary in the attempt to develop connections with monocultural peers.

Study data suggest that only with experiences of connection with others in the new setting do TCKs reveal a more authentic presentation of themselves. Cockburn's (2002) position on the inability to connect with peers who do not share diverse cultural experiences serves to explain why TCKs seek out other possible connections. For some study participants these connections emerged from their relationships with multicultural university faculty. Other participants found connections within sub-group affiliations.

Due to their ready sub-group affiliations, settings such as missionary and military cultures render them as safe zones wherein expressing the "true" self is encouraged and supported. International student and expat communities similarly appear to serve as safe zones for self-revelation. Data from this study suggest that on large college campuses wherein strong separations exist between groups, TCKs seek out pre-existing connections and relationships in their efforts to achieve acculturation. Azmitia et al. (2011) suggest that the search for connection is more directly related to the search for others who can serve as models of identity development. Explaining the need for TCKs to seek out communities that will validate their role and importance necessary for

what Erikson (1959) identified as a requirement for identity formation. In cases where there was no access to the previously discussed safe zones participant narratives suggested a breakdown in the ability to successfully navigate cultural difference.

Within the college setting, the inability to rely on meaningful connections resulted in feelings of being shunned by monocultural peers. In response, participants ostracized themselves from the dominant group or returned to a safe zone. For some participants this meant completing undergraduate studies at a hurried pace in order to move overseas and back to a safe zone community. For others it meant taking a break from their undergraduate studies and returning to a host country or a country previously associated with the concept of *home* for a period of time before continuing completion of their degree. The need to find solace within a safe zone community outside of the passport culture explains the importance of the alternate attachments serving as a frame of reference by which to understand meaningful experiences. The search for meaning in a place of previous domicile is viewed as an attempt to process through feelings of loss associated with the meaningful experiences in that location (Milligan, 1998).

Participants described a variety of meaningful experiences associated with alternate attachments and as such returned to those locations in search of answers. One participant explained how a return to her country of birth, a host country that neither parent had connections too, resulted in an increased awareness of faith and spirituality. Her period of exploration assisted in the identification of a sub-group affiliation previously overlooked and one that she sought out upon her return to the college setting. Another participant chose to complete her studies and return to a

previous host country that she remembered fondly because of the meaningful relationships she had developed with neighbors. She explained how returning to a familiar place of support had helped her to define professional goals, resulting in her remaining there to complete graduate studies. Participants' experiences support Bowlby's (1979) assertions that the principles of protection, safe haven, and secure attachment are the foundations of attachments, and therefore, attachment relationships can vary.

Data analysis uncovered feelings of shame associated with the inability to adapt to settings that lacked meaningful connections, providing an explanation for the reason why TCKs rarely seek out assistance from campus resources and remain unidentified by faculty and staff. Ainsworth's (1967) observations of how environmental and social factors shape attachment style supports Marmarosh's (2009) belief that in order to understand a student's refusal to seek resources one must understand the student's attachment style. The degree of change in beliefs and perceptions of identity informed by the period of immersion in a host culture could have a significant impact on the attachment style of the individual, in some cases altering previous attachments (Terrazas-Carrillo et al., 2014). Shilkret and Shilkret's (2011) explanation of how attachment expectations vary from culture to culture reinforces the importance of considering the cultural influences that separate TCKs from their monocultural peers and their ability to find common ground.

Participants explained how monocultural peers had often misunderstood their search for meaningful connections. Sharing multicultural experiences had been perceived as bragging when the true intent had been to establish common ground

through the possibility of existing connections. Participants shared how, informed by peer responses, they had refrained from using university resources fearing the humiliation that would come from their needs being misinterpreted, or worse, that they would be perceived as pretentious and entitled. Consequently, such concerns discouraged TCKs from reaching out, preferring instead to figure things out on their own unassisted. Retrospective exploration of TCK experiences during this study provided an opportunity for participants to think critically about the factors that may have positively influenced their experiences of campus life and could have contributed to their resilience in managing the emotional unpredictability of repatriating to a relatively unknown passport culture.

Implications for Practice

Participant narratives suggest that within the college setting an environment specifically established for international students best served TCKs. Where schools failed to identify TCKs as belonging to a group outside of the dominant majority, TCKs found a place of inclusion within the international student communities. This allowed them to develop meaningful and mutually supportive connections with peers while also benefiting from the resources specifically developed for international students new to navigating the American educational system and American culture. Participants voiced frustrations related to the application process as demographic information sought by universities failed to include important aspects related to the educational backgrounds and experiences needed to accurately represent them. Areas identified as being the most important for positive experiences of campus life included accurate representation

of the individual, housing options, and culturally competent student support resources.

College applications can be lengthy and involved giving students the opportunity to highlight talents and accomplishments that make them a worthy addition to the incoming freshman class. Minor changes in the college application process can be made in order to facilitate easier identification of TCKs and other multicultural students. Many of the study participants shared how demographic information misrepresented them, thus leading to staff confusion regarding their needs. For example, one Hispanic student whose name and physical appearance seemed to meet criteria for a Caucasian monocultural male generated staff confusion. Asking about which college community students feel best captures their demographic would help meet both college and student requirements and individual identification.

Some participants shared how living overseas prevented them from touring colleges and therefore missing opportunities to meet faculty and participate in interviews. An interview option through the use of innovative technology would allow potential students and universities to determine best fit for TCKs and assist the need for appropriate housing and supportive services. Campus resources developed around the needs of international students are sensitive to issues of language, religious beliefs, and community supports.

Several institutions have moved toward a housing system comprised of special interest housing options that promote cultural diversity, gender awareness, and interests related to advocacy and inclusion in addition to the more traditional special interest dorms that focus on professional fields of study. Special interest housing focuses on the importance of developing a diverse and supportive community but, unfortunately, is not

yet the norm across college campuses. This type of housing system also serves to provide a network of supportive services for students in all years.

The term support service is often synonymous with mental health and counseling on college campuses. While the goal of these services is to use a culturally informed perspective, that may not extend to include awareness of multicultural students. As a result, campus student centers with cultural or religious affiliations (ie. Latino Student Center and Baptist Student Union) often have staff trained to be sensitive to challenges unique to the students they represent. Providing culturally sensitive mental health services would require additional training that could be easily provided through programs for international students and offices of global initiative. Additionally, these programs could provide guidance for the development of culturally informed freshman orientation curricula. Norton's (1978) dual perspective stresses the importance of cultural awareness of the self and others to promote collaboration and engagement within social work education. Moreover, this strengths-based diversity-rich perspective is relevant to all aspects of the collegiate experience and an excellent framework by which to view program development and campus resources.

Limitations

Limitations of this study include the participant sample size and the inability to equally represent the 4 TCK sub-groups outlined in the original definition of TCKs. Participant criteria revealed how the four sub-groups fail to include all TCKs, suggesting that a larger participant sample would allow for greater understanding of the sub-group criteria, as well as whether sub-group criteria should be redefined to accurately

represent the range of diversity among TCKs. Several participants explained that they had not known of the TCK moniker until they read the study's recruitment flyer and participated in the screening process, showing how the difficulty to identify TCKs includes the inability of TCKs to self-identify. Additionally, participants shared how they were initially reluctant to participate because they did not feel the TCK criteria accurately represented them, based on the original definition by Pollock and Van Reken (2001), and were unsure whether or not this researcher would understand the challenges of a TCK. Study methodology outlined this researcher's procedures for self-disclosure following interviews and only if asked by the participants. However, data collection showed that all participants asked about this researcher's status and subsequently became more forthcoming about their experiences. Findings reflect how disclosure of the researcher's TCK status prior to the interview may have been beneficial because knowledge of shared experiences and investment in the topic would have encouraged additional disclosures.

Implications for Future Research

Research findings reveal the importance of, and need for, further investigation of the TCK identity that participants defined as ambiguous. Pollock and Van Reken (2001) provided an excellent guide for giving meaning to the nomadic experiences of TCKs and to the development of the third culture. Throughout recruitment and data collection mental health challenges were identified as a byproduct of the TCK experience associated with identity development. Deeper understanding of the aspects that contribute to the ambiguous identity would help to understand attachment, identity

development, and the concept of uneven development that emerged from the data.

In consideration of the current political climate fraught with uncertainty regarding immigration and geographic relocation an examination of TCK resilience using a cultural lens would contribute to the nascent literature on multicultural and cross-cultural childhood experiences regarding trauma. Participant disclosure of TCK status associated with parents' indentured servitude demonstrated how the TCK experience is not always associated with privilege and can be connected to experiences more closely related to emigration. Thus, research could be extended to include children previously excluded from traditional TCK definitions.

Conclusion

This study brought to light the challenges that surround TCK identification, the diversity surrounding that which contributes to multicultural experiences, and the strong connections forged through adversity. The goal of this research was to understand TCK experiences in order to identify ways to support these students as they enter higher education as well as challenges associated with personal growth and academic achievement. Relatively recent advances in technology have facilitated the ability for students to maintain connections regardless of location. Students are now able to connect with family members and peers over social media platforms, preserving meaningful relationships and support systems. As campus global initiatives and student services continue to move toward programming focused on diversity and inclusion, it's important to consider ways to prevent students who are multicultural and unable to fit in a demographics box from falling through the cracks. This research encourages the need

for further study into the ways that college campuses can continue to develop culturally competent student services, supportive resources, and educational programming.

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Appendix A: IRB Approval for Human Subject Research

University of Pennsylvania
Office of Regulatory Affairs
3624 Market St., Suite 301 S
Philadelphia, PA 19104-6006
Phone: 215-573-2540/ Fax: 215-573-9438
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
(Federal-wide Assurance # 00004028)

10-Aug-2017

Allison V Werner-Lin
awer@sp2.upenn.edu
Shakira Espada-Campos
shakirae@upenn.edu

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR	: ALLISON V WERNER-LIN
TITLE	: Third Culture Kids (TCKs) Go To College: A retrospective narrative inquiry of international upbringing and collegiate engagement
SPONSORING AGENCY	: NO SPONSOR NUMBER
PROTOCOL #	: 828071
REVIEW BOARD	: IRB #8

Dear Dr. Allison Werner-Lin:

The above-referenced research proposal was reviewed by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) on 09-Aug-2017. It has been determined that the proposal meets eligibility criteria for IRB review exemption authorized by 45 CFR 46.101, category 2.

This does not necessarily constitute authorization to initiate the conduct of a human subject research study. You are responsible for assuring other relevant committee approvals.

Consistent with the federal regulations, ongoing oversight of this proposal is not required. No continuing reviews will be required for this proposal. The proposal can proceed as approved by the IRB. This decision will not affect any funding of your proposal.

Please Note: The IRB must be kept apprised of any and all changes in the research that may have an impact on the IRB review mechanism needed for a specific proposal. You are required to notify the IRB if any changes are proposed in the study that might alter its IRB exempt status or HIPAA compliance status. New procedures that may have an impact on the risk-to-benefit ratio cannot be initiated until Committee approval has been given.

If your study is funded by an external agency, please retain this letter as documentation of the IRB's determination regarding your proposal.

Please Note: You are responsible for assuring and maintaining other relevant committee approvals.

If you have any questions about the information in this letter, please contact the IRB administrative staff. Contact information is available at our website: <http://www.upenn.edu/IRB/directory>.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,
**Amanda
O'Hara**
IRB Administrator

Digitally signed by Amanda
O'Hara
Reason: I attest to the accuracy
and integrity of this document
Date: 2017.08.10 14:57:25 -04'00'

Appendix B: Recruitment E-mail

Hello, my name is Shakira Espada-Campos and I'm a doctoral student at the University of Pennsylvania's School of Social Policy and Practice. I'm working toward my Doctorate of Clinical Social Work and my dissertation research focuses on understanding the collegiate experiences of American Third Culture Kids.

I'm seeking your assistance in the recruitment of American Third Culture Kids for participation in my study. I'm looking for participants who are aged 21 and older, who lived overseas between the ages of 10 and 19, and returned to the United States to attend university. Participation is voluntary and entails a one-time interview carried out over a secure internet-based platform.

Below I have included recruitment information that can be shared in alumni newsletters and emails.

If you have any questions or concerns about this study please contact me at shakirae@sp2.upenn.edu.

Thank you,
Shakira Espada-Campos

Are you a THIRD CULTURE KID?

- ◆ Are you the child of an American diplomat, military service member, missionary, or international business person?
- ◆ Did you grow up overseas or attend an international school between the ages of 10 and 19?

If you answered YES to either of these questions, you may be a Third Culture Kid (TCK)/Adult Third Culture Kid (ATCK) and eligible to participate in a dissertation research study.

The purpose of this study is to understand the experiences of ATCKs who returned to their home country, the United States, to attend university.

ATCKs 21 years of age and older are eligible to participate.

Participation is voluntary and you won't be penalized if you choose not to participate. If you have questions about the study or if you'd like to know more, you can contact the researcher, Shakira Espada-Campos, directly at shakirae@sp2.upenn.edu.

Appendix C: Social Media Recruitment Flyer

Are you a THIRD CULTURE KID?

- ◆ Are you the child of an American diplomat, military service member, missionary, or international business person?
- ◆ Did you grow up overseas or attend an international school between the ages of 10 and 19?

If you answered YES to either of these questions, you may be a Third Culture Kid (TCK)/Adult Third Culture Kid (ATCK) and eligible to participate in a dissertation research study.

The purpose of this study is to understand the experiences of ATCKs who returned to their home country, the United States, to attend university.

ATCKs 21 years of age and older are eligible to participate.

Participation is voluntary and you won't be penalized if you choose not to participate. If you have questions about the study or if you'd like to know more, you can contact the researcher, Shakira Espada-Campos, directly at shakirae@sp2.upenn.edu.

Appendix D: Consent Form

Title of the Research Study: Third Culture Kids (TCKs) Go To College: A retrospective narrative inquiry of international upbringing and collegiate engagement

You are being asked to take part in a research study. This is not a form of treatment or therapy. It is not supposed to detect a disease or find something wrong. Your participation is voluntary which means you can choose whether or not to participate. If you decide to participate or not to participate there will be no loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Before you make a decision you will need to know the purpose of the study, the possible risks and benefits of being in the study and what you will have to do if you decide to participate. The research team is going to talk with you about the study and give you this consent document to read. You do not have to make a decision now; you can take the consent document home and share it with friends and family.

If you do not understand what you are reading, do not sign it. Please ask the researcher to explain anything you do not understand, including any language contained in this form. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign this form and a copy will be given to you. Keep this form, in it you will find contact information and answers to questions about the study. You may ask to have this form read to you.

What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of this dissertation research is to learn more about the undergraduate college experiences of Adult Third Culture Kids (ATCKs). This research will contribute to culturally competent social work practice, education, and policy.

Why was I asked to participate in the study?

You are being asked to join this study because you are an American Adult Third Culture Kid (ATCK), aged 21 or older, who lived overseas for a minimum of two years between the ages of 10-19 and returned to the United States for college.

How long will I be in the study?

The study will take place over a period of 2 years. This means for the next 24 months we will ask you to spend one day participating in this study. The session will last for approximately one hour and will be an in-depth interview of your experiences as an ATCK.

Where will the study take place?

The study will take place through an encrypted virtual platform (ie. Zoom) during an agreed upon scheduled time.

What will I be asked to do?

You will be asked to participate in a face-to-face interview where you share your experiences as an American TCK living overseas, and the experiences of your return to the United States to attend college.

What are the risks?

There is minimal risk to the participants of this study as they are not members of vulnerable populations and this study does not pose a risk more severe than those encountered in

everyday life. However, as identifying information will be collected, actions will be taken to ensure the confidentiality of participants.

How will I benefit from the study?

There is no benefit to you. However, your participation could help us understand and learn more about the unique experiences of TCKs, and ways in which social workers and educators can serve TCKs in the college setting.

What happens if I do not choose to join the research study?

You may choose to join the study or you may choose not to join the study. Your participation is voluntary.

There is no penalty if you choose not to join the research study.

When is the study over? Can I leave the study before it ends?

The study is expected to end after all participants have completed all interviews and all the information has been collected. The study may be stopped without your consent for the following reasons:

- The PI feels it is best for your safety and/or health-you will be informed of the reasons why.
- You have not followed the study instructions
- The PI, the sponsor or the Office of Regulatory Affairs at the University of Pennsylvania can stop the study anytime

You have the right to drop out of the research study at any time during your participation. There is no penalty for dropping out of the study.

If you no longer wish to be in the research study, please contact Shakira Espada-Campos at shakirae@sp2.upenn.edu and inform of desire to no longer participate.

How will confidentiality be maintained and my privacy be protected?

We will do our best to make sure that the personal information obtained during the course of this research study will be kept private. However, we cannot guarantee total privacy. Your personal information may be given out if required by law. If information from this study is published or presented at scientific meetings, your name and other personal information will not be used.

Only the researcher will see identifying information provided during qualitative data collection, and the researcher will de-identify the information to assure participant anonymity.

De-identification Procedures: (1) Participants will be asked to choose an alias/pseudonym for use in transcription and will be assigned an ID number for identification of sub-group affiliation. (2) Additional identifying information, such as names of schools or businesses, will be changed to protect the anonymity of the participants.

All data will be stored in a private password-protected file on a password-protected computer and upon completion of interview transcription, the researcher will listen to the files and read transcription to check for accuracy and note inflection, then the recorded files will be destroyed. When sharing data analysis with mentors or others for the purpose of seeking assistance with coding and conceptualization, only information that has been de-identified will be shared.

What happens if I am injured from being in the study?

We will offer you the care needed to treat injuries directly resulting from taking part in this research. We may bill your insurance company or other third parties, if appropriate, for the costs of the care you get for the injury, but you may also be responsible for some of them.

There are no plans for the University of Pennsylvania to pay you or give you other compensation for the injury. You do not give up your legal rights by signing this form.

If you think you have been injured as a result of taking part in this research study, tell the person in charge of the research study as soon as possible. The researcher's name and phone number are listed in the consent form.

Will I have to pay for anything?

There are no costs associated with participating in this study.

Will I be paid for being in this study?

There is no compensation associated with this study.

Who can I call with questions, complaints or if I'm concerned about my rights as a research subject?

If you have questions, concerns or complaints regarding your participation in this research study or if you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you should speak with the Principal Investigator listed on page one of this form. If a member of the research team cannot be reached or you want to talk to someone other than those working on the study, you may contact the Office of Regulatory Affairs with any question, concerns or complaints at the University of Pennsylvania by calling (215) 898-2614.

When you sign this document, you are agreeing to take part in this research study. If you have any questions or there is something you do not understand, please ask. You will receive a copy of this consent document.

Signature of Subject

Print Name of Subject

Date

Appendix E:

Semi-Structured Interview Guide: Third Culture Kids (TCKs) go to college

Background Questions:

Q1-Tell me about yourself and what you feel makes you an Adult Third Culture Kid.

- a. What do you usually answer when people ask you where you are from?
- b. Do you remember the last time someone asked you where you were from? Would you please tell me that story?
- c. When you think of *home*, what does that look like for you?¹

Q2-What was the experience of moving like for you?

- a. Who travelled with you/lived with you in your new environment? Who stayed behind? In what ways were you able to maintain relationships with people who stayed behind?
- b. What feelings would you use to describe that period of time?
 - i. What words do you feel best describe the experience?
 - ii. To what extent did you learn the language of your host culture?
 - iii. Tell me about where you lived, learned, and played. Did you live in a foreigner's compound or in the community/on the economy?
 - iv. How long did you live there before returning to your passport country?

Q3-Tell me about the return to your passport country. (What was the reason for your return?)

- a. How would you describe the experience of returning?
 - i. Was your return what you had expected/not expected? In what ways?
 - ii. Who returned with you? Did others stay behind? Had you visited in the interim? Were things as you had imagined?

College Experience Questions:

Q4-Tell me about your choice for college/university and what made you choose that school.

- a. What were your expectations about college?
 - i. In what way were those expectations met/unmet?

Q5-What was it like to leave your family and go to college?

- a. How did you stay in touch?
- b. What was contact with your family like while you were away at school?

Q6-What was it like to say goodbye to the friends you had made while living overseas?

- a. Did you stay in touch? If so, how?
- b. What became of those friendships during your time in college and after?
- c. What was it like meeting new people in college?
 - i. What was it like to develop new friendships?
 - ii. How do you feel people responded to your experiences living abroad?

Reflections on College Experience:

Q7-What were your greatest challenges and successes in college? As you look back on

¹ Prompt was added to include the in-vivo code "home" after interviews showed usage of this word directly related to description TCK identification.

your college experience what do you think most contributed to you graduating?

- a. Family Support
 - i. In what ways did family support you while you were in college?
 - (ii. If family was not supportive: What do you think your family could have/should have done to support you during your time in college?)
- b. Friends
 - i. In what ways did your friends support you? Did you support them?
 - ii. Did you stay in contact with other TCKs or were these new friends?
- c. Campus Organizations/Faculty/Student Services
 - i. To what extent did you seek out campus resources?
 - ii. What do you think college/university staff and faculty need to know and do to support TCKs?

Additional Insights:²

Q8-Now that you've shared your story, has your definition of TCKs changed in any way?

- a. How would you define the experience of being a TCK, to someone who has never heard the term?

Q9-Is there anything about being a TCK that I haven't asked you about that you feel is really important for me to know?

- a. College experience?

² Added in response to participant responses following the researchers TCK self-disclosure after interviews.

Appendix F: Codebook

<u>Uneven Development</u> : The range of disconnection in acquisition of stage based tasks expected of peers in multiple "homes".	Global Perspective	The acquisition of understanding regarding economic, social, and political issues.
	Skill Acquisition	The acquisition of independent living skills dictated by the passport culture.
<u>Investment</u> : Fostering growth and permanence through meaningful attachments to people, places, and ideas.	Peer Relationships	The mutuality of effort given when sharing authentic self with others.
	<i>Homesteading</i>	Perceptions associated with place settlement and development of roots.
	Group Affiliation	The range of connections to others based on a shared belief system, values, or traditions. This can also include the connections formed with others giving importance to the uniqueness of experiences and perspectives.
<u>College Choice</u> : Factors contributing to school selection and the decision to pursue an undergraduate degree.	Ease of Travel	The consideration given to a school's location/region based on access to transportation to maintain meaningful connections to others.
	Seeking Affiliation	Seeking out settings that align with personal beliefs, interests, and connections to others.
	Knowledge of Resources and Relationships	Awareness of options and processes of admission, enrollment, and campus life. Often influenced by connections to others with ties to the school or the location of the school.

THEME	CODE	DEFINITION
<u>Understanding Identity:</u> Perceptions of self, defined by the individual and others.	Expected Identity	Perceptions of self assumed/imposed on an individual based on societal expectations of behaviours, beliefs, and stereotypes associated with race and religion.
	Passport Identity	Perceptions of self based on place of departure, home of record, ownership of property, and residence of extended family members.
	Educational Identity	How participants define self through the importance and value given to education. Influenced by the belief that education is inalienable.
	Ambiguous Identity	How participants define self as informed by diverse experiences, multicultural beliefs, and meaningful interpersonal relationships.
<u>Home:</u> That which fosters a sense of emotional grounding and stability. This concept is not confined to place and is determined by that which encourages authenticity and understanding of the self.	Spousal Relationships	The way in which romantic relationships foster a sense of belonging, attachment, and the quality of being grounded.
	Familial Relationships	The way in which familial relationships are impacted in response to shared experiences and adversity.
	Pursuing Normalcy	Seeking self-actualization through a deeper understanding of experiences, growth, and development related to the self, and in relation to others.
	<i>Community</i>	The connections established through shared experiences of difference from the dominant culture.